

A GAP BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHY THE CASE OF SENSUS COMMUNIS [COMMON SENSE] AND ITS ENEMIES*

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From the beginning of Western thought, it is usual that the philosophers identify themselves and their knowledge as an opposite of other prestigious knowledge forms of their epoch and their society. A classic Greek philosopher distinguishes himself from poets and sophists; likewise, his modern colleagues distinguish themselves from the sciences, from literature, or they do so from the public forms of thinking, out of the strictly defined academic sphere. This distinction is focused both on the difference between the knowledge forms with an emphasis on the uniqueness of philosophy, and on the declaration of the need of a special institutional network for philosophy. The planned contribution offers a detailed case study about a trend in European

philosophy that identifies itself as an opposite of common sense. The first section of the analysis of this phenomenon is focussed on several German classics, especially on Hegel's well-known argumentation against the common sense, the role of the same concept in Kant's thought, and the interpretation of the specialities of the German tradition of *sensus communis* in Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. Hungarian specialities of the common sense tradition will be detailed in the next section, with a comparison of the German and Hungarian cases. In the concluding section, we will describe the consequences of the distinction of professional philosophy from common sense, for the social role of philosophy in general.

KEYWORDS: *Gadamer, German philosophy, Hegel, Hungarian philosophy, Kant*

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“Oh my dear common sense!
What high rank did the Lord give you?”
[Erdélyi 1981: 43]

1. Introduction

At first, the picture of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s classic historical analysis of the role of *sensus communis* in the [mainly German] *Geistesgeschichte* will be outlined. This will be followed by a short overview of the history of the same concept in modern philosophy as a special answer to a challenge of the changed structure of communication. Following that, it will be shown the usage of this concept by Hegel as a negative point of orientation for his philosophical self-identification. Later, a concise history of the Hungarian tradition of common sense will be offered. In the next section, János Erdélyi’s Hegelian attack against *common sense* will be demonstrated, in his *The Present of the Inland Philosophy*, formulated as a critique of Gusztáv Szontagh’s philosophy. In the end, Szontagh’s answer and the relevance of this debate today will be mentioned.

2. Central-European Tradition of Sensus Communis in Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Interpretation

Gadamer has an inevitable role in the revival of the tradition of *sensus communis* within the framework of self-interpretation in the *Geistesgeschichte*. This concept has an eminent position amongst the *guiding concepts of humanism* just after the fundamental term of *Bildung [culture]*, in the initial chapters of his *Truth and Method*. Although Gadamer’s approach is based on a historical retrospection, his work cannot be considered as a work of history of philosophy; it was not the author’s aim either. It is interesting to read how he interprets the history of this tradition, as a narrative of submergence into unimportance, from a special German point of view of the post-war period. Although Gadamer speaks about the German tradition as an opposite of the example of “England and the Romance countries,” his ideas can be extended in this [and only in this] context to all the philosophical cultures east to the English-French model, including the Hungarian one. Consequently, Gadamer’s argumentation is important for the history of Hungarian philosophy, and as a theoretical and methodological background too. The core of the decline of this concept is based on the process of depoliticisation; he formulated it in the following form:

Whereas even today in England and the Romance countries the concept of the *sensus communis* is not just a critical slogan but a general civic quality, in Germany the followers of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson did not, even in the 18th century, take over the political and social element contained in *sensus communis*. The metaphysics of the schools and the popular philosophy of the 18th century – however much they studied and imitated the leading countries of the Enlightenment, England and France – could not assimilate an idea for which the social and political conditions were utterly lacking. The concept of *sensus communis* was taken over, but in being emptied of all political content it lost its genuine critical significance. *Sensus communis* was understood as a purely theoretical faculty: theoretical judgment, parallel to moral consciousness [conscience] and taste. [Gadamer 2006: 24]

Within German culture, Gadamer sees the possibility of preservation of “critical significance,” exclusively in the writings of the authors of Pietism. It is not by accident that in these years Gadamer was involved in research of the œuvre of Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782). His study for the modern edition of this author’s Latin work on *sensus communis* was published between the first and the second edition of his *Truth and Method*. Gadamer emphasizes the significance of Pietism in the following way:

And yet there is one important exception: *Pietism*. It was important not only for a man of the world like Shaftesbury to delimit the claims of science – i.e., of demonstratio – against the »school« and to appeal to the *sensus communis*, but also for the preacher, who seeks to reach the hearts of his congregation. Thus the Swabian Pietist *Oetinger* explicitly relied on Shaftesbury’s defence of the *sensus communis*. [Gadamer 2006: 24]

Later he repeated and emphasized his idea of the difference between the depoliticised German common sense and the civic content of this concept in other countries in the preface for the second edition:

In Germany [which has always been pre-revolutionary] the tradition of aesthetic humanism remained vitally influential in the development of the modern conception of science. In other countries more political consciousness may have entered into what is called the »humanities«, »lettres«; in short, everything formerly known as the *humaniora*. [Gadamer 2006: xxvi]

According to Gadamer's train of thought, this German restriction of the *sensus communis* achieved its top in Kant's aesthetics. Kant's concept is purely aesthetic, free from moral and political contents; and in this form is influential on later generations:

Similarly, when Shaftesbury took up the concept it was, as we have seen, also linked to the political and social tradition of humanism. The *sensus communis* is an element of social and moral being. Even when this concept was associated with a polemical attack on metaphysics (as in Pietism and Scottish philosophy), it still retained its original critical function. By contrast, Kant's version of this idea in his *Critique of Judgment* has quite a different emphasis. There is no longer any systematic place for the concept's basic moral sense. As we know, he developed his moral philosophy in explicit opposition to the doctrine of »moral feeling« that had been worked out in English philosophy. Thus he totally excluded the concept of *sensus communis* from moral philosophy. [Gadamer 2006: 29]

Gadamer interprets Kant's concept of *sensus communis*, formulated in § 40 of the *Critique of Judgment* as a kind of degradation, by the following words:

When, however, we are really concerned with the ability to grasp the particular as an instance of the universal, and we speak of sound understanding, then this is, according to Kant, something that is »common« in the truest sense of the word – i.e., it is »something to be found everywhere, but to possess it is by no means any merit or advantage«. The only significance of this sound understanding is that it is a preliminary stage of cultivated and enlightened reason. It is active in an obscure kind of judgment called feeling, but it still judges according to concepts, »though commonly only according to obscurely imagined principles«, and it certainly cannot be considered a special »sense of community«. The universal logical use of judgment, which goes back to the *sensus communis*, contains no principle of its own. [Gadamer 2006: 30]

Later, he formulates the other side of Kant's ideas, the public aspects of taste and a concept of *sensus communis* in the following way:

Thus when Kant calls taste the true common sense, he is no longer considering the great moral and political tradition of the concept of *sensus*

communis that we outlined above. Rather, he sees this idea as comprising two elements: first, the universality of taste inasmuch as it is the result of the free play of all our cognitive powers and is not limited to a specific area like an external sense; second, the communal quality of taste, inasmuch as, according to Kant, it abstracts from all subjective, private conditions such as attractiveness and emotion. [Gadamer 2006: 38]

Gadamer's reading is plausible, because it is true that Kant identifies the *common human understanding* and the [aesthetical] *power to judge*, and in the well-known § 40, he also makes pejorative notes on the *common* [*gemein* and *vulgar*] *human understanding*, a.k.a. *common sense*. [Kant's work will be quoted from a more modern English translation than the one used in the English version of Gadamer's work.]

[This] *common human understanding* [*gemeine Menschenverstand*], which is merely man's sound [(but) not yet cultivated] understanding, is regarded as the very least that we are entitled to expect from anyone who lays claim to the name of human being; and this is also why it enjoys the unfortunate honour of being called common sense [*sensus communis*], and this, indeed, in such a way that the word common [*gemein*] (not merely in our language. Where it is actually ambiguous, but in various others as well) means the same as *vulgar* – i.e., something found everywhere, the possession of which involves no merit or superiority whatever. Instead, we must [here] take *sensus communis* to mean the idea of a sense *shared* [by all of us], i.e., a power to judge that in reflecting takes account [a priori], in our thought, of everyone else's way of presenting [something], in order *as it were* to compare our own judgment with human reason in general and thus escape the illusion that arises from the ease of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones, an illusion that would have a prejudicial influence on the judgment. [Kant 1987: 160]

Based on the same locus, Kant's opinions can be interpreted in another way, as well, differently from Gadamer's reading. In this similarly plausible interpretation, Kant's main endeavour is to clear the classic concept of *sensus communis* from several connotations of the *common human understanding* [*gemeine Menschenverstand*], and to emphasise the social connotations of this term. Kant's formulation that *common* means here *shared* is able to remind us the political potential of the original term. If the *common* [*gemein*] human understanding [*Menschenverstand*] means something *vulgar*, we should avoid the

usage of the German term and its equivalents in modern languages, and use the Latin term where the adjective *communis* does not have the pejorative connotation of *gemein*. In other words, we should save the *gemeine Menschenverstand* from its vulgarity and put it into the rank of *sensus communis*, including the social aspects of the later one. We can observe here not only the depoliticisation of the concept, but also the hidden preservation of its political aspect. It is symptomatic that 20th -century philosophers like Hannah Arendt, find the core of the political philosophy in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. If they discovered the political content in Kant's aesthetics, it must be covered earlier, at least, in a hidden form, probably in the context of the Kantian interpretation of the tradition of the *sensus communis*.

Returning to Gadamer's interpretation, and summarising his opinions, the German tradition of *sensus communis* at first restricted to the aesthetics, later its content become gradually more and more empty, and it evaporated in the end both in the philosophical scholarship and in the open sphere of the cultural discourse. Gadamer's narrative is surprising in a way, because he offers a detailed analysis of Hegel's role, in other loci of his book. It is important that the previous chapter about *culture [Bildung]* is mainly based on Hegel's interpretation of this concept and on his usage of this term. Hegel's figure and his role in Gadamer's masterpiece are important for us because the concept of *common sense* was an important *negative point of orientation* for him; he defined the characteristics of philosophical thinking *against* common sense. In his argumentation, the main German representatives of the tradition of *sensus communis* were the same figures who were discussed in Gadamer's historical reconstruction in the same role; also, they are the authors of the German *Popularphilosophie* and *Pietism*. It seems that Hegel represents a definite gap in the history of the *sensus communis*; we can say that this term *did not evaporate*, but Hegel *exterminated* it, at least, in professional philosophy. It is interesting that Hegel's role in the extermination of *sensus communis* does not appear in Gadamer's historical analysis. Hegel's opinions on the *sensus communis* and Gadamer's several notes on the Hegelian philosophy will be discussed later, in a separate chapter; before that a summary of the modern history of the concept of *sensus communis* is due, but from a special point of view. In the following section, the modern history of this concept will be discussed in its communicational context; *sociability* as an element of the modern meaning of this term will be linked with the ideal typical *target audience* of the philosophers on common sense.

3. The Modern Concept of *Sensus Communis* as Part of the Reflection on the Structural Turn of Philosophical Communication

The revival of the concept of *sensus communis* in modern philosophy cannot be understood without an analysis of the challenge concerning the self-interpretation of philosophy, based on the structural turn of scholar communication. This structural turn is double; on the one hand, it is the change of Latin to modern national vernaculars; on the other, it is a change of institutional network. Philosophy leaves schools and appears in new forums, such as the columns of the newly-established scholar periodicals in national languages, meetings of foundations, societies, and saloons. Amongst these new institutions, academies have a distinguished role both as forums scholars can meet and as organisers and supporters of books' and periodicals' publication. [This function of the Hungarian Scholarly Society was definitely important.]

As for the interpretation of this new communicational situation of philosophy and its changing target audience, several theories appeared in the 18th century, amongst them well-known ideas of classics. In German philosophy, the most familiar ones are Herder's historical analysis of the changing structure of *Publicum* in his *Letters on Humanism*, and Kant's double twin-concepts. On the one hand, he distinguishes between *private and public usage of reason*, and *philosophia in sensu scholastico* and in *sensu cosmopolitico*, on the other. Both reflections refer to the role of the philosopher, with a rethinking of the meaning and social role of philosophy itself. According to Herder, philosophers must consider the changing structure of their target audience when they are speaking to this audience, and offer a theoretical description of the change of its structure. However, Kant proclaims the liberty of the *public* usage of reason on the one hand, and he regards *philosophia in sensu cosmopolitico* as an ideal of the philosophical thinking, on the other. However, as a professor of a German university, he used his reason for a kind of *philosophia in sensu scholastico*, based on a *private* contract, at the same time. The situation described by his double twin-concepts is his own personal situation reflecting both his strictly prescribed obligation as a professor and his liberty of publication of his works. However, this description is based on his personal experiences; the principle of philosophical thinking rooted in it is universal and fits his moral philosophy.

However, the first theoretical answer to the communicational turn was the revival and reinterpretation of the term of *sensus communis* in

the 18th century, with complex prehistory and long reception. The antique sources of this term are highly diverse in themselves, from Aristotle's *common intellect* [*koinos nous*] through the different terms used in various periods and branches of the Stoics to the well-known Latin version formulated by Cicero, which is an interpretation in itself. The modern revival of this term is attached to the name of Shaftesbury, who was familiar with the philological details of the history of his chosen guide concept, both in Greek and in Latin, according to the testimony of his influential essay entitled *Sensus Communis* [Shaftesbury 1709], especially in the philological notes of its second edition [Shaftesbury 1737]. He quotes a locus of Juvenal when the Roman poet uses the term *sensus communis* [Sat. 8.v.73]. Later, in his own interpretation of this concept, he emphasises the civic and social context, formulated in the following way:

Some of the most ingenious Commentators, however, interpret this very differently from what is generally apprehended. They make this Common Sense of the Poet's, by a Greek Derivation, to signify Sense of Publick Weal, and of the Common Interest; Love of the Community or Society, Natural Affection, Humanity, Obligingness, or that sort of Civility which rises from a just Sense of the common Rights of Mankind, and the natural Equality there is amongst those of the same Species. [Shaftesbury 1709: 61]

The *Greek Derivation* does not refer in here either to a well-known term of the Aristotelian epistemology, or an expression of the Greek Stoics, but to a neologism of an author of the late Stoic philosophy, Marcus Antonius who was not a native Greek speaker. He uses this word to characterize his foster-father. It is symptomatic that modern translations can mirror its meaning only by long paraphrases. In the following part the original term and two English translations will be quoted; the long one is a widespread version in the modern English scholarship, Casaubon's version was known already in Shaftesbury's lifetime:

ἡ κοινονοημοσύνη [Marcus Aurelius Imperator *Ad se ipsum* l. 16. 2.] "he considered himself no more than any other citizen;" [*Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*, translated by George Long.] "his moderate condescending to other men's occasions as an ordinary man. [*The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, translated by Meric Casaubon.]

Marcus Aurelius' term is obscure in a way, and it was not in the core of the philosophical vocabulary at any time. For Shaftesbury, the terminological issues were clear, but he solves them elegantly, by a single philological note:

It may be objected possibly by some, particularly vers'd in the Philosophy abovemention'd, that the κοῖνος νοῦς, to which the Κοινονοημοσύνη seems to have relation, is of a different meaning. But they will consider withal how small the distinction was in that Philosophy, between the ὑπόληψις, and the vulgar αἴσθησις; how generally Passion was by those Philosophers brought under the Head of Opinion. (Shaftesbury 1737: 105)

Based on the train of thoughts and Shaftesbury's attached philological notes, we can say that he searched an antique term with an authority of a classic, which had cognitive, aesthetical and moral aspects together, but the most important connotation is a respect for others. We should consider the consequences of our acts upon others and we should respect others' opinions in the formulation of our judgements. This sociability was not characteristic in the antique antecedents of this concept before Marcus Aurelius; in the classical antique epistemology, there is a cognitive human faculty that is common in every human being, but which appears and works individually. In the modern revival of this concept, the moral and social aspects form the core, a term is needed that can describe the thinking of the new audience of philosophy, recruited from educated persons, but which functions out of schools. In this new term, judgements on truth, beautiful, and [moral] good are connected with each other, and they are characterised by public mentality. Humans of *common sense* are sensitive to the events of the community, including politics, and they are inclined to make judgements together, in a continuous and mutual reflection upon the opinions of each other. This modern tradition of *sensus communis* become a dominant trend in the Scottish *common sense school*. Within a few decades, they developed the moral philosophy [Smith 1776], aesthetics [Blair 1783], and a synthesis [Reid 1785] of this school; and it always functioned as a public philosophy of Scottish and British intellectual life.

This public, social aspect of the modern revival of *sensus communis* is emphasised in Gadamer's classic interpretation as well:

By *sensus communis*, according to Shaftesbury, the humanists understood a sense of the common weal, but also »love of the community or society, natural affection, humanity, obligingness.« They adopt a term from Marcus Aurelius, *koinonoemosune* [*koinonoēmosyne*] – a most unusual and artificial word, confirming that the concept of *sensus communis* does not originate with the Greek philosophers, but has the Stoical conception sounding in it like a harmonic. [Gadamer 2006: 22]

Later, in the Continental, mainly German, reception of the idea of *sensus communis* a gradual emergence of the aesthetical elements can be observed, that went as far as dominance and hegemony, in connection with the appearance of aesthetics as a separate philosophical discipline, at first in the German scholarship. It did not mean that the German followers of the English and Scottish masters have forgotten the public, social aspects. This trend of German philosophy was entitled *Popularphilosophie*, with a reference to the public aspects of the Latin term *populus*. The model of a well-known author of the *Popularphilosophie*, Johann August Ernesti was *populus Romanus*, the political community of the Roman citizens with suffrage, in the description of his own German ideal typical target audience [Ernesti, 1762: 153]. However, this German intellectual community makes purely aesthetical judgments, its model is a political community; consequently, on this aesthetical community, a would-be German political community can be based. There was an important terminological consequence of the new German context of the *common sense* tradition. It is trivial for English speakers that *common sense* is just the English version of *sensus communis*; but the German equivalents can differ from the original term, as it was demonstrated above in the quoted locus of Kant's *Critical of Judgment*. Manfred Kuehn, in his monograph on the German reception of the Scottish *common sense* philosophy, exemplifies the appearance of the German terms for the *common sense* by the œuvre of Johann Christian Lossius [1743–1813]:

Thus, just like Beattie, he rejects a formal definition of common sense and proposes as the only possible alternative a nominal definition through an enumeration of the objects and characteristics of common sense. Again, just like Beattie, he begins his discussion with a consideration of the different sense of »common sense«: *sensus communis*, public sense, *koinonoemosyne*, *koinai doxai*, etc. The only exception is that he also deals with the German *gesunde Vernunft* and its cognates. [Kuehn 1987: 96]

Two years after the work referred in the abovementioned quotation [Lossius 1775], Lossius published a separate German monograph on the *gesunde Vernunft* [Lossius 1777], and he was not alone with his German philosophical vocabulary. We can consider that at the time Kantian critical philosophy and Hegel's early works appeared, German philosophical terminology contained several expressions of its own for the English *common sense* and the Latin *sensus communis*. From this point of view, the connection between the new German terms and their Latin and English models was not evident, and later the same situation occurred with the Hungarian equivalents that are partly mirror-words of the German vocabulary.

4. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Critique of Sensus Communis

Hegel opposes the *speculation* and the *sound intellect* as early as the creation of his first serious philosophical work entitled *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*. He devotes a separate chapter to this topic entitled *relation of Speculation to Common Sense*. His concrete opponent is Reinhold in here; and Hegel in his argumentation identifies Reinhold's opinions and the ideas of the German *Popularphilosophie* of the 18th century which was really based on the concept of *common sense*, inherited from the abovementioned Scottish tradition. A clear dichotomy emerged in here and a hierarchy of the speculation and the common sense that become characteristic in all of his œuvre:

For this reason, speculation understands sound intellect [gesunde Menschenverstand] well enough, but the sound intellect [gesunde Menschenverstand] cannot understand what speculation is doing. [...] Common sense [gesunde Menschenverstand] cannot understand speculation; and what is more, it must come to hate speculation when it has experience of it; and, unless it is in the state of perfect indifference that security confers, it is bound to detest and persecute it. [Hegel 1977a: 99-100]

Hegel's terms for common sense, in accordance with the German philosophical vocabulary of his epoch, are *gesunde Menschenverstand*, *gemeine Menschenverstand*, or if the meaning is clear from the context, *Menschenverstand* without adjectives. It should be noted here that these expressions emerged in the German reception of the Scottish *common sense* school, especially in the German *Popularphilosophie*, as

it was mentioned above in the case of Lossius, and one of them, *gemeine Menschenverstand* was used by Kant, as well. [The widespread English translation quoted above, creates further terminological problems when it uses two equivalents for *gesunde Menschenverstand*, namely *sound intellect* and *common sense*.] Consequently, Hegel in here attacks in a way both the ideas and vocabulary of his opponent, Reinhold, and the ones whom he regarded Reinhold's ancestors. We can find the motif of *common sense* as a stubborn and anti-theoretical phenomenon; which will be significant especially in the Hungarian reception of these Hegelian ideas:

In particular, ordinary common sense [*gemeine Menschenverstand*] is bound to see nothing but nullification in those philosophical systems that satisfy the demand for the conscious identity by suspending dichotomy in such a way that one of the opposites is raised to be the absolute and the other nullified. This is particularly offensive if the culture of the time has already fixed one of the opposites otherwise. [...] Common sense [*gesunde Menschenverstand*] is stubborn; it stubbornly believes itself secure in the force of its inertia, believes the non-conscious secure in its primordial gravity and opposition to consciousness; believes matter secure against the difference that light brings into it just in order to reconstruct the difference into a new synthesis at a higher level. (Hegel 1977a: 101–102)

Later, in the preface to his early masterpiece entitled *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he opposes *insight* as the result of the theoretical thinking and the emotive approach to the aim of *edification*, in the framework of the actual status of the *self-conscious spirit* in the process of historical development. The representatives of the emotive approach to him are partly the authors of the theoretical works of the early Romanticism, partly the German *Popularphilosophie*, and partly the religious enthusiasts of his age:

[A]t the stage which self-conscious Spirit has presently reached [...] now demands from philosophy, not so much knowledge of what it is, as the recovery through its agency of that lost sense of solid and substantial being. Philosophy is to meet this need, not by opening up the fast-locked nature of substance, and raising this to self-consciousness, not by bringing consciousness out of its chaos back to an order based on thought, nor to the simplicity of the Notion, but rather by running together what thought has put asunder, by suppressing the differentiations of the No-

tion and restoring the feeling of essential being: in short, by providing edification rather than insight. The 'beautiful', the 'holy', the 'eternal', 'religion', and 'love' are the bait required to arouse the desire to bite; not the Notion, but ecstasy, not the cold march of necessity in the thing itself, but the ferment of enthusiasm, these are supposed to be what sustains and continually extends the wealth of substance. [Hegel 1977b: 4–5]

In his same work, Hegel returns to the topic of the roles and characteristics of the *common sense* in details, based on this general description. For example, in the subchapter entitled *Reason as Lawgiver*, he explains that in the formulation of the moral laws *common sense* runs into a contradiction. In this special case, the relationship between *theoretical thinking* and *common sense* is the same as it was shown in general, in the *Preface*.

Later, in the introduction to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in the subchapter entitled *Philosophy Proper Distinguished from Popular Philosophy*, he extended the term of a concrete trend of history of philosophy, i.e. German *Popularphilosophie* to a timeless concept of a method of thinking from Cicero through Pascal to the religious enthusiasts and mystics. In these quite different authors the only common element is a concept of the *common sense* linked with *moral sense*. It is the same characteristic that excludes them from the narrow, Hegelian, concept of real philosophy. Hegel argues for their exclusion in the following way:

But the drawback that attaches to this Philosophy is that the ultimate appeal even in modern times is made to the fact that men are constituted such as they are by nature, and with this Cicero is very free. Here the moral instinct comes into question, only under the name of feeling [...]. Feeling is first of all laid hold of, then comes reasoning from what is given, but in these we can appeal to what is immediate only. Independent thought is certainly here advanced; the content too, is taken from, the self; but we must just as necessarily exclude this mode of thinking from Philosophy. [Hegel 1892: 93]

In conclusion, we can declare that the tradition of *common sense* is present in the whole of Hegel's œuvre, as a *negative point of his philosophical self-definition*. In his opinion, the tradition built on this concept is a part constantly present in human culture as a *sub-philosophical level of thinking*. He identifies the common German expres-

sions for *common sense* with the long philosophical tradition of *sensus communis* and excludes both of them from his concept of philosophy. [As it was demonstrated above, Kant's way was different; he observed a difference between the meanings of *gemeine Menschenverstand* and *sensus communis*.] However, Hegel attacks both the terminology and the ideas of his opponents, and as it was mentioned above, it was not conscious; the German equivalents of the *common sense* introduced by his opponents were regarded by him as common German words out of the scholarly vocabulary of philosophy. Consequently, the problem of the difference between terminologies has not appeared in explicit form in this discourse, as opposed to the case of the Hungarian Hegelians as it will be discussed later.

As mentioned above, Gadamer's historical interpretation did not touch Hegel's role in the extermination of the concept of *common sense* from professional philosophy; however, he discusses Hegel's ideas in detail on important loci of his masterpiece. At the end of this chapter, we must touch upon Gadamer's two notes on Hegel relevant from the point of view of the relationship between Hegelianism and *common sense*. Gadamer's first *guiding concept* is *Bildung* [culture] that is described by him based on Hegel's writings. In Gadamer's interpretation, the Hegelian concept of *Bildung* is linked with *spirit* as something beyond the *immediate human knowledge*:

Even in this description of practical *Bildung* by Hegel, one can recognize the basic character of the historical spirit: to reconcile itself with itself, to recognize oneself in other being. It becomes completely clear in the idea of theoretical *Bildung*, for to have a theoretical stance is, as such, already alienation, namely the demand that one »deal with something that is not immediate, something that is alien, with something that belongs to memory and to thought«. Theoretical *Bildung* leads beyond what man knows and experiences immediately. [Gadamer 2006: 12]

Later, in the last chapter, Gadamer discusses the historical meaning of the term *speculative* in German philosophy that has an important role in Hegel's thought as well. The essence of the content of this term, in his interpretation, is something opposite to the *dogmatism of everyday experience*:

If we now use the word »speculative« as it was coined by philosophers around 1800 and say, for example, that someone has a speculative mind

or that a thought is rather speculative, behind this usage lays the notion of reflection in a mirror. Speculative means the opposite of the dogmatism of everyday experience. A speculative person is someone who does not abandon himself directly to the tangibility of appearances or to the fixed determinateness of the meant, but who is able to reflect or – to put it in Hegelian terms – who sees that the »in-itself« is a »for-me«. [Gadamer 2006: 461 – 462]

Based on these loci, it can be concluded that Hegel's thought is the opposite of any usage of *common sense*, in Gadamer's interpretation, as well; however, here it is not the term *common sense* or a synonym that is used. In other words, Gadamer considers Hegel's thought as contrary to *common sense*, but he did not attribute significance to Hegel's explicit opinions concerning this concept. What is relevant to the topic of the present writing is that the motifs of *immediate human knowledge* and the *dogmatism of everyday experience*, as expressions linked with *common sense* in Hegel's philosophy, will have a significant role in the critique of the *common sense* written by the Hungarian Hegelians.

5. The Hungarian Tradition of Common Sense

The tradition of *common sense* emerged in two subsequent periods in the history of Hungarian thinking. In professional philosophy, it appeared within the framework of the Hungarian controversy on Kant [1792–1822], in József Rozgonyi's works. Rozgonyi, based on his education in Utrecht and Oxford, was engaged in the Scottish common sense philosophy. He formulated his critique of Kant based directly on the opinions of the contemporary Scottish *common sense* philosophers. However, his booklet was published in 1792, though it was written earlier, before he could read Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. It is interesting that in his interpretation Kant and the Kantians identify *common sense* with *vulgar thinking* [*sensus vulgi*]. Although he did read the *Critique of Judgment*, he attributes to Kant a real Kantian idea that becomes well-known based on the § 40 of the *Critique of Judgment* what was quoted earlier in the context of Gadamer's historical interpretation:

If the Kantians meant common sense the same what the abovementioned Scottish philosophers do, e.g. Aristotle's ☒☒☒☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒☒☒, Cicero's *naturae iudicia*, i.e. the immediately evident propositions, which are the

fundaments of every demonstration, [...] by other words, principles, what can be neglected by words, but must be followed by the whole of life and by the constant rationality of the acting, and involuntary recognised; in this case I do not know who could neglect the common sense. [...] The Kantians mean common sense the perception of the crowd, which perhaps can be unreasonable. But the abovementioned excellent Scottish philosophers have never recognised the common sense in this meaning. In their discourse, the perception belongs both to the philosophers and to the crowd. [Rozgonyi 2017: 39]

Si quod Kantiani per sensum communem id, quod Scoti illi philosophi intelligant, v. g. Aristotelis κοινὰ δόξαι, Ciceronis naturae iudicia seu propositiones immediate evidentes, quae fundamentum praebent omni demonstrationi, [...] principia, quae si quis ore neget, toto vitae tenore et agendi rationi constanti vel invitatus affirmare cogitur, nescio, qui possint cum relicere? [...] Kantiani per sensum communem sensum vulgi quandoque absurdum intelligunt. Sed tali significato eximii illi Scoti sensum communem nunquam acceperunt. Sensus ille, de quo hi disputant, acque philosophorum ac vulgi est. [Rozgonyi 2017: 39]

In the same period within the academic sphere, the concept of *common sense* plays an important role in the field of *aesthetics* which became an independent philosophical discipline at the same time. Although it is a highly interesting and significant field of research, discussing it would be beyond the scope of the present paper. Recently a lot of fruitful research has been conducted in this field, [for a representative volume of the recent results see Balogh–Fórizs 2018].

At the same time outside the academic sphere, in the realm of public thinking, despite the important role the German *Popularphilosophie* had in the transfer of ideas, direct contact with the Scottish tradition was constantly present, as well. For example, József Kármán's articles often refer to German authors who were probably known to his target audience; however, the motto of his program for the reform of national culture is a paraphrase of the expressions in the Scottish Enlightenment [*politeness* and *refinement*; *a nemzet csinosodása*].

The second period of the emergence of *common sense* in Hungarian thought was parallel with the 19th-century Continental revival of the Scottish school signed by the new French translations of the most important authors. The two periods are not divided into two separate parts in Hungarian intellectual history; it was not a revival of a forgot-

ten philosophy, just a rejuvenation of a continuously present system of ideas. It is symptomatic that an important debate in the Hungarian intellectual life of the Reform Era, entitled *Age of Epic versus Age of Drama*, was provoked by a book review of a new Hungarian version of an aesthetical work by the Scottish school [Blair 1838].

The author of this book review, Gusztáv Szontagh, is the same person that was the target of János Erdélyi's critique in his attack against the philosophical usage of *common sense*, in favour of a Hegelian self-understanding of Hungarian philosophy [Szontagh 1839a]. Szontagh's position as an author is symptomatic as far as the consequences of the turn of the structure of scholarly communication are concerned. In his entire career, he acted as a public intellectual, not as a member of the education system. His lifeworld consisted of the Hungarian cultural and scholarly press that developed during his early career at the same time the Hungarian Scholarly Society was founded. [It is quite symptomatic, but accidentally his first writing was published in the year the Hungarian Scholarly Society – later renamed Hungarian Academy of Sciences – was founded]. Later, the members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences offered him the forum and infrastructural background needed to work, but not a livelihood. He received the current publications of the Academy and a certain amount of handwriting paper every year which was a significant help at that time; also, he had the right to participate at the academic meetings and lectures which, in his lifetime, were not yet festive events but quite real scholar forums. A part of his rights and obligations was to evaluate the applications for various awards. He became a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with a regular income only several months before his death; as an intellectual, he earned his living by writing his entire career. At the beginning of his career, there was a serious Hungarian scholar press, but his generation could remember the narrower circumstances of the previous period, and a significant amount of Hungarian scholars' works was still published in Latin. Consequently, due to his personal position, he could understand the institutional and communicational background of the vivid intellectual life of the Hungarian Reform Era. The conscious reflection on the real and ideal role of philosophy in the newly-established modern national culture is a characteristic feature of all 19th-century Hungarian philosophy, especially of Szontagh's works. This is a consequence of the turn in the structure of scholarly communication. The Hungarian philosophers' aim is to transcend school philosophy and achieve *philosophia in sensu cosmopolitico*; but they were writing in Hungarian when he

abandoned the Latin school of philosophy. The extension of the national audience of philosophy goes hand in hand with the loss of the aristocratic, but working universality of the academic sphere. Although the paradox of this new situation was characteristic of the entire European philosophical life, it was clearly and thoroughly formulated in the smaller national cultures of East-Central Europe, e.g. in the Hungarian one. When Szontagh tends to define the role of philosophy and his role as a philosopher, he cannot avoid the question of his relationship with the national culture. The role of [Hungarian] philosophy is a theoretical critique of every phenomenon in the life of the nation, including economy, social changes, political events, opinions, and programs in his opinion, which fits his activity as a critic. Hungarian philosophy will be developed as a synthesis of these theoretical critiques; and philosophical critique has a fundamental role in the creation of the modern Hungarian culture, economy, and political community. In his philosophy, he is consistent with this program; his *first propylaeum* about the possibilities and ideals of the Hungarian philosophical revival of his time is decidedly based on the texts of his book reviews published earlier [Szontagh 1839b]. Based on the evidence of his second propylaeum, it is clear that his previous works aims to establish a social and political philosophy [Szontagh 1843]. The *common sense* tradition as a basis to define the role of Hungarian philosophy and his own task was obvious to him because it was not unknown phenomenon in the Hungarian intellectual life; in addition to that, there was a Continental revival perceptible in the years of his intensive philosophical self-teaching; but the most important reason was that this philosophy fitted well his role as a public intellectual who speaks philosophically about public affairs to a national audience outside the academic sphere. Szontagh was not engaged to the Scottish school as Rozgonyi was in the previous generation; in particular, their relationship to Kantianism was different. Szontagh's thought was based on highly divergent sources. For example, in his memoirs, he expressed his negative opinion about the whole post-Kantian German philosophy; in his opinion, Fichte was not a good inheritor of Kant and he attributed a kind of obscurity to Schelling; he attacked Hegel's philosophy especially that of the Hungarian Hegelians in published form only. The top of his Hegel-critique was the so-called *Hegelian trial* [1838–1842].

The personal background of Szontagh's thought and his self-interpretation is the philosophical understanding of the role of a *public intellectual*. It was clear for him that this role was not possible on the Hungarian scene in the previous generation [in his memoirs, Szontagh

illustrates this with Kazinczy, who almost went bankrupt because of his high post costs caused by Kazinczy personally organizing the forums for Hungarian culture; later Szontagh could earn a living writing for more developed forums.]. His conscious reflection on the structure of scholarly communication includes descriptions of the dangers of the creative intellectuals' new lifeworld as well. An extended and autonomous sphere of cultural production creates a separate world made of words and paper as a simulacrum of the real world, and a scholar can easily lose his way in it. A modern intellectual can easily change reality with its description, or model, especially if the description is incarnated in written words, i.e. in a form of communication familiar to him. This new machinery of cultural production is a dominantly *male world*; consequently, the alienation from reality appears at first as a non-realistic image of the female characters in the fictional literature in Szontagh's book reviews. Generally speaking, the author who lost his way in the paper-world of words cannot see the *female face of reality*. Another form of description of the same intellectual behaviour is a *metaphor of illness* based on personal experiences. According to this metaphor, the alienation in the paper-world causes somatic symptoms; it is the reflection of the objective reality onto the subjectivity of the intellectual. Szontagh gradually found the figure of the intellectual alienated in the world of mere words, in every sphere of praxis and theory. In his satiric short story, written in the last years of the Reform Era, he describes three typical [Hungarian] figures as fellow-travellers of the narrator on a journey in a dream. The first one is a poet who exchanges reality with the world of his poems; the second one is a political speaker who mistakes his rhetoric for the political possibilities, and the third is a philosopher who lost his way in his own terminology. The fellow-travellers remained in the dream when the narrator woke up because they fit the world of dreams and not reality [Szontagh 1845]. In Szontagh's reviews of philosophical works, it is clear that in his view Hungarian Hegelians were typical examples of this trap intellectuals might fall into; they identify their automatized terminology with reality and they do not describe or interpret the reality itself. After the revolution, he concretises what he means by the alienation in the paper-world made of words in the context of controversy about early Hungarian history; and it is clear that this controversy is connected to the national self-critique that followed the revolution [1850–1852]. His critique is actually focused on several historians, but it can be extended to the Hegelian philosophy of history as well. In here, the alienation from the objective world and

the creation of a paper-world made of words means that not only do historians underestimate or neglect the data of archaeology, historical climatology, and geography as well as disregard the existing data on the culture of the Eurasian nomads, but they also create difficult narratives from rare written sources, eminently from single ethnonyms with obscure reading. It is interesting to quote at first Szontagh's memoirs written at the beginning of this controversy and after that cite his published discussion paper. [His memoirs remained in manuscript and were published just a few years ago.] In his memoirs he writes generally about Hungarian scholars of his epoch, however, he illustrates his point with the specialists of early Hungarian history:

A lot of Hungarian scholars [...] [c]ultivates a field of research, but he does not cultivate the human in himself. He becomes a scholar, but his knowledge is warped, because it does not make him an erudite man. He always sits in his study room and researches to gain the respect of his scholars-peers. The continuous sitting and room air destroys his body; his stomach is bad, he has sleeping problems and nervous diseases, and in the end he falls into hypochondria. Sometimes it happens for a certain research, which cannot achieve their aim, like e.g. the explication of early Hungarian history. He made all his life meaningless and miserable for nothing. Hungarians have Eastern blood; consequently, they can deeply submerge into their studies. A full submerge into a thought is the main requisite of wisdom amongst Eastern wise men. [Szontagh 2017]

In his discussion paper, the virtual world constructed from books and ideas guides us to the fairy tales of history. It is notable and quite rare in the Hungarian discourse of this epoch that both the Hungarian and the Slovakian speculations about the early history of these nations are evaluated using the same method, and scholars can become examples of the same dangerous collective illusion:

If my fellows, who formulated their opinions against me, did not submerge into the vortex of idealism i.e. fantasies, yet, because of their enthusiasm and fervency, it was caused by their inborn gumption, and not by their definite will. But they are going to be characterised by the feature of an armchair scholar, that is the implication in the fictional world of books and ideas. If they went far away in this path governed by the pure zeal; they can arrive to the mysterious fairyland where István Horvát and Kollár discovered so many Hungarians and Slovaks. [Szontagh 1851]

Here it is enough to mention only István Horvát's speculation about early Hungarian history; it is the identification of the Scriptural *Girgasits* [Jos 3,10; 24,11] with the ancestors of the Hungarians. In the theology of history, the name of *Girgasits* is a quite common example of the power of the Lord of history who can cancel nations totally, only *their mere names remains*. In Ján Kollár's poem, the sweetheart of the poet, a daughter of a Lutheran pastor of the Saale-valley in Upper-Saxony appears as a descendant of the ancient Slavic tribes of this land who had really existed here many centuries ago; and she becomes the symbol of the possibility of the re-Slavisation of the local population based on the right of blood, following their Germanisation in the past centuries.

6. János Erdélyi's Hegelian Attack against Common Sense

In the time of the Hegelian trial, Erdélyi was a participant of the same intellectual life of Pest as Szontagh; based on his aesthetical writings, Erdélyi was elected member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the Department of Philosophy, and he attended the same scholarly meetings as Szontagh did. Surprisingly, he did not show any interest in the Hegelian philosophical controversies at this time. The *Hegelian trial* was over a few years before the revolution of 1848, and after that, in the post-revolutionary epoch, Hegel was forgotten everywhere in Europe. Under these circumstances, Erdélyi's endeavour to reformulate Hungarian philosophy based on Hegel is unusual two decades after the *Hegelian trial*, in a post-revolutionary period. When he formulates his critique of the *Hungarian harmonistic philosophy* and the usage of the concept of *common sense* in the middle of the 1850s, he was silently witnessing the *Hegelian trial* [1838–1842], and the abovementioned controversy on early Hungarian history [1850–1852]. He correctly assesses that these controversies are the collisions of the same opinions in different fields, and he is conscious of the significance of the problem language poses within these arguments, both in terms of the lingual model of reality and that of the scholarly vocabulary within these arguments. Based on these antecedents, he regards the new argument provoked by him as the *retrial of the Hegelian trial*, and in his argumentation, he focuses on the language and terminology of philosophy.

The first eight chapters of János Erdélyi's well-known work entitled *Present of the Inland Philosophy* was published on the columns

of *Pesti Napló* as a series of articles in 1856; next year he published a completed version as a separate volume. One of his main opponents, János Hetényi died a few years before that [†1853], Szontagh died a year after the publication of Erdélyi's work [†1858]. Due to these biographical conditions, Erdélyi and Szontagh could not develop a detailed argument; it did not have a formal end: Szontagh reflected on Erdélyi's critique, Erdélyi formulated his reply, but revoked the manuscript after Szontagh's death, and it was published as late as the 20th-century edition of Erdélyi's works.

According to the interpretation formulated in Erdélyi's work, the previous period in Hungarian philosophical life was dominated by the *Hungarian harmonistic philosophy* of János Hetényi and Gusztáv Szontagh; the guiding concepts of this philosophy were *usefulness in life*, *popular elocution* and *nationality*, and all these three expressions were based on the concept of *common sense* and a philosophical tradition based on this idea. Erdélyi unveiled these guiding concepts as preconceptions, erroneously formulated requirements of philosophy. In his opinion, the requirement of *nationality* fits the belles-lettres as a particular phenomenon of the culture that expresses emotions, but it is alien from philosophy which expresses the universality of thinking:

The principle of nationality is continuously strong in poetry, weaker in religion and utterly ceases later in philosophy. It is the teaching of cultural history, as well, that is actually an image of the human spirit manifested in the chain of events. [Erdélyi 1981]

He argues that the requirement of the *usefulness in life* is fulfilled by thinking based on *speculation* rather than on *common sense*:

Spirit is useful in life, because it contains all the singularities, opposites and contradictions as hidden destroying and boiling, stating and negating elements because it is the way of becoming. This point is the top of speculation where all things are opposites or syntheses of the opposites. A purely distinctive thinking, frozen in its distinctions will never achieve these heights. Consequently, the common culture, the so-called common sense realizes »inconsequence« in its greatest men in every country but does not care about higher correspondences. [Erdélyi 1981]

As far as the present writing is concerned, the most important part in which the requirement of *popular elocution* is unveiled:

I can see that people are afraid of the idealism concerning language and common sense. They defend language against science. I believe that on the level of the development where our popular philosophers are they do not need a precise terminology to explain their thoughts, and they can be satisfied by the service of the common language. [Erdélyi 1981]

The essence of Erdélyi's statement is that the terminological norms of his opponents are contrary to the requirements of a professional vocabulary of philosophy. Against the root of every problem, *common sense*, as a possible starting-point of philosophical thinking, he offers three arguments. The first and the second one are linked to each other; he attributes to his opponents a usage of the concept of the *common sense* as contrary to the development of the human thinking; consequently, he derives every retrograde inclination, underdevelopment, contra-enlightened behaviour:

Why is preferable the continuous recommendation [...] of something what does not need learning, just knowing, by common sense? Oh, my dear common sense! What high rank did the Lord give you? But, whether common sense can easily be compatible with superstition, ignorance, stagnancy, all the moral and material wrong, till the pest? [Erdélyi 1981]

His third argument is based on his interpretation of the history of philosophy. Erdélyi restricts the long tradition of *common sense* philosophy to the Scottish school, and describes it as an *obsolete*, *anachronistic* and mainly *parochial* phenomenon in Western thought. It is strange to read today his lines about the end of English philosophy with Hume and the world-wide victory of Hegelianism if the reader is familiar with the philosophical circumstances of the time the text originated. From a special Hungarian point of view, it should be mentioned that several British philosophers from the post-Humean period were well-known in the Hungarian philosophy of the Hungarian Reform Era, amongst them Jeremiah Bentham was the most important one. [In his text, Erdélyi uses the ethnonyms 'English,' 'Scottish' and 'British' as synonyms; sometimes 'the Scotsmen' means the authors of the Scottish *common sense* school.]

In philosophy, common sense appeared one hundred years ago in Scotland in a short but effective role" [Erdélyi 1981], "The philosophy of com-

mon sense emerged and declined suddenly. After Hume, who was sceptical about empirical experiences and offered a novelty for the progress of philosophy, we cannot speak about English philosophy from the point of view of history of philosophy. [...] Both the Scottish school and Kant appeared after and against Hume; Scottish philosophy remained a local phenomenon, but Kantian philosophy occupied the world. [Erdélyi 1981]

Of course, in Erdélyi's view, the ending point of the history of philosophy is not Kant but Hegelianism. Every local philosophical culture must be developed to the level of this Hegelian end of philosophy; in the Hungarian case, an explicit Hungarian Hegelian philosophy must be evolved from the Hegelian content encoded in the structure of Hungarian language. It can be demonstrated philologically as well that Erdélyi's train of thoughts is based on Hegel, but he uses a different method here. According to Hegel, the tradition of *common sense* is a constant part of the history of human thinking on a low level, below philosophy. Erdélyi regards it as a phenomenon of a particular period of the history of philosophy, in his argumentation of the interpretation of *common sense* philosophy as obsolete and anachronistic. The most significant difference is the emphasis of the role of language and the importance of the scholarly vocabulary in Erdélyi's writing. He argues that the Hegelian statement that professional philosophy cannot be built on the concept of *common sense*, is linked to an utterance emerged in the Hungarian discourse, namely, that the language of the Hungarian *common sense* philosophers does not meet the requirements of scholarly [Hungarian] vocabulary of philosophy. This idea is not fit for the whole of the tradition of the *sensus communis* as it appears in Hegel's history of philosophy; e.g. it is hardly demonstrable that Cicero's usage of the scholarly vocabulary of philosophy was oblivious and inaccurate. This direct connection of the requirements of a *professional philosophy* and a *scholarly vocabulary* is a characteristic of Erdélyi's Hegelian argumentation, adapted to the Hungarian conditions. Its causes are the experiences of the Hungarian linguistic reform on the one hand, and his relationship to language that was radically different from the ideas of his opponent, Gusztáv Szontagh, on the other.

7. Szontagh's Answer

Differences of the approaches concerning Erdélyi's and Szontagh's language were never discussed explicitly. Szontagh's reflection on Er-

déli's critique was not focused on the linguistic expression of philosophy. [His article was entitled *Hungarian Philosophy: Answer to János Erdélyi's Work Entitled "Present of the Inland Philosophy"*; see Szontagh 1857.] At first, he referred to Erdélyi's notes about the Scottish *common sense* school as an obsolete and local phenomenon and as a root of the Hungarian *common sense* philosophers, e.g. Szontagh himself. In Szontagh's opinion, Erdélyi is a follower of an obsolete system of philosophy, he did not realise in his intellectual solitude at Sárospatak that Hegel's philosophy died in Germany as well; consequently, it cannot constitute the foundation of any contemporary Hungarian philosophy that inclines to be in synchrony with the universal trends. The core of his argumentation is to demonstrate the dichotomy between their approach of the essence and self-understanding of philosophy and their different principles concerning the role of human thinking and cognition. Erdélyi, in his argumentation for an ideal of philosophy as an academic discipline, regards human thinking and cognition as *values in themselves*, and he unwittingly separates them from *social praxis*. Szontagh's approach is the opposite, he formulates in his last writing the embeddedness of human thinking in the activity quite clearly: "[A] philosopher does not think purely for the sake of thinking; on the contrary: a human is thinking and investigates the truth for the right acting" [Szontagh 1857].

Based on his previous works, it can be declared that he includes the right *political* acting in the concept of *right acting*. According to him, decisions and programs of the politicians on the one hand, and a philosophical critique of this political praxis, on the other, cannot be observed separately. From this point of view, we should reinterpret Gadamer's opinions about the depoliticisation of *common sense* in the Central European tradition, at least, in the Hungarian case.

8. Conclusions

Does this ancient argument, swooned in its beginning, have any consequences or conclusions today? The significance of this debate is based on the long survival of Erdélyi's several topics in the modern discourse. At first, the lack of the reflections on Erdélyi's solitude in the 20th-century secondary literature is conspicuous. Erdélyi is alone with his Hegelian ideas in Europe, but he regards Hegel's philosophy historically successful and triumphant. [His single possible Hegelian ally was Ľudovít Štúr; however, their national and political convictions were antithetical. But Štúr died in January, 1856, before Erdélyi wrote his work.]

Although modern researchers were informed about the post-revolutionary “Hegel-free” decades, for them Hegel was an inevitable starting-point, again, whether they were part of a school of neo-idealism, or the Marxism that found its way back to its roots in German classic philosophy. Erdélyi’s demand of a professional and speculative philosophy that was formulated contrary to the embeddedness in praxis was appropriate for the endeavour to establish a professional philosophy in the 20th century. For researchers of the ideological topics of the *everyday consciousness*, *everyday language* and the like, in the Communist era, Erdélyi’s critique of the backwardness of *common sense* seemed to be familiar, as well.

Erdélyi’s most enduring topic was the development of the Hegelian idea of the dichotomy of *emotion* and *cognition*. In Erdélyi’s thought, it appears as the dichotomy of the belles-lettres which expresses particular emotions and philosophy which expresses universal thought, with the conclusion that belles-lettres can express nationality by particular emotions, but philosophy can be only universal. The consequence of this topic was the creation of a *deep gap* between the thinking about the political community called nation and the long oblivion of the possibility of a public philosophy embedded in and reflected onto the social and political praxis.

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